

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

UNCLAS STATE 184194

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN, CARR, BL, MX

SUBJECT: TREATMENT OF AMERICANS IN FOREIGN JAILS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT FROM SENATORS JOHN SPARKMAN AND CLIFFORD P. CASE, CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MINORITY MEMBER, RESPECTIVELY, OF COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN RELATIONS. LETTER HAS BEEN REFERRED TO DEPARTMENT FOR REPLY. PLEASE CABLE POSTS' COMMENTS TO ENABLE DEPARTMENT RESPOND FULLY.

2. LETTER FOLLOWS: QUOTE: THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS RECENTLY CONCLUDED TWO DAYS OF HEARINGS ON THE TREATIES WITH MEXICO AND CANADA ON THE EXECUTION OF PENAL SENTENCES. THE COMMITTEE HAS ORDERED THESE TREATIES REPORTED FAVORABLY TO THE SENATE.

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3. DURING THE COURSE OF THE HEARINGS, THE COMMITTEE WAS DISTURBED BY THE REPORTS IT RECEIVED FROM FORMER PRISONERS IN MEXICO AND THE FAMILIES OF PRISONERS REGARDING THE ABUSE OF AMERICANS IMPRISONED IN MEXICAN INSTITUTIONS. THESE WITNESSES TOLD OF TORTURE, EXTORTION AND DENIAL OF FOOD AND MEDICAL CARE NECESSARY FOR SURVIVAL. COMPLAINTS WERE ALSO RECEIVED ABOUT THE INABILITY OF UNDERSTAFFED

CONSULAR OFFICES TO ASSIST ADEQUATELY AMERICANS IN MEXICO.

4. THE COMMITTEE APPRECIATES THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO HAS INITIATED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS AND TO REVIEW THE CASES OF AMERICANS ARRESTED FOR THE POSSESSION OF SMALL AMOUNTS OF DRUGS. THESE STEPS ARE LAUDABLE, BUT THE COMMITTEE FEELS THAT THE UNITED STATES CAN TAKE ADDITIONAL ACTION TO PROTECT ITS CITIZENS CONTENDING WITH THE LEGAL SYSTEMS OF OTHER NATIONS, INCLUDING MEXICO, BOLIVIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICANS ARE HELD ON CRIMINAL CHARGES HAVING NOTHING TO DO WITH POLITICS.

5. THE MOST URGENT REPRESENTATIONS SHOULD BE MADE TO THESE NATIONS TO EXPRESS THE STRONG INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED REGARDLESS OF THEIR NATIONALITY. THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO HAS ACTED TO ALLEVIATE THE SITUATION OF PRISONERS IN THE AREA OF MEXICO CITY, BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, REPORTS TO THE COMMITTEE INDICATE THAT THE SITUATION IN THE OUTLYING AREAS OF MEXICO HAVE NOT CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY.

6. PROMPT, EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE TO U.S. CITIZENS BY CONSULAR OFFICES IS IMPORTANT TO THOSE ACCUSED OF CRIMES IN UNFAMILIAR LEGAL SYSTEMS. IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION
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SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE WORK LOAD OF CONSULAR OFFICERS TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF THE LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICANS VISITING THAT COUNTRY. THE COMMITTEE ALSO FEELS THAT THIS REVIEW SHOULD CONSIDER THE SITUATION IN OTHER NATIONS WHERE LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICANS ARE INCARCERATED.

7. INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE COMMITTEE INDICATES THAT TEN OR TWELVE QUALIFIED, EXPERIENCED OFFICERS ARE NEEDED IN MEXICO. THESE ADDITIONAL OFFICERS WOULD ALLOW BETTER SERVICE TO THE PRISONERS AND OTHERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE FACING DIFFICULTIES IN AREAS NOT SERVED BY A CONSULATE. ALTHOUGH SMALLER NUMBERS OF ADDITIONAL CONSULAR OFFICERS WOULD BE NEEDED IN OTHER NATIONS SUCH AS BOLIVIA, THERE IS NO LESS AN URGENT DEMAND FOR PERSONNEL.

8. THE COMMITTEE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR CONSIDERATION OF THESE CONCERNS AND INFORMATION ON THE RELEVANT DEVELOPMENTS. UNQUOTE. CHRISTOPHER

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